

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kansas
COUNTY:	Harvey
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

## 1. NAME

COMMON:

Bernhard Warkentin Homestead (preferred name)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Little River Stock Farm

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: East of the Farmers Co-op Elevator and north of the Santa Fe railroad tracks at the northeast corner of Halstead. 140 E. North St.			
CITY OR TOWN: Halstead		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: No. 4 Garner Shriver	
STATE: Kansas	CODE: 67056	COUNTY: Harvey	CODE: 079

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mr. and Mrs. Harley J. Stucky		STATE: Kansas
STREET AND NUMBER: 2117 No. Main - Box 394		
CITY OR TOWN: North Newton	STATE: Kansas	
		CODE: 67117
		20

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Register of Deeds		STATE: Kansas
STREET AND NUMBER: Harvey County Courthouse		
CITY OR TOWN: Newton	STATE: Kansas	
		CODE: 67114
		20

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: None		FOR NPS USE ONLY
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	ENTRY NUMBER
		DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

79-2250-002

+ 079-2250-0003-0009

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Warkentin Homestead is a complete farm and includes a house, barn, carriage house, chicken barn, hog barn, power house and silo. All of these facilities are located on a 20-acre tract, part of which is in the city limits and the rest located just to the northeast of Halstead. The Little Arkansas river forms a beautiful natural boundary on the northwest, north and east sides while the Santa Fe railroad tracks establish the southern limit and the Farmers Co-operative Elevator borders on the west. The property is neatly tucked away with the trees, the foliage and the river, and travelers on nearby K-89 can catch only a glimpse of these impressive facilities. The buildings are large but well-executed and blend beautifully with each other. The unit is functional and undoubtedly was practical in its day.

The two-story frame house designed by well-known Kansas architect John G. Haskell is large yet delicate and incorporates a series of bay windows, spacious porches, marble fireplaces, and unique trim. At the top of the house there is a finial which serves not only as a beautiful decorative finish but also suggests the Russian influence in Warkentin's past. Originally the house had horizontal lap siding which was painted gray with white trim; white asbestos siding now covers the exterior.

Probably the most unique room was Warkentin's office and library located at the southwest corner of the main floor. It has a bay window with colored stained glass (red, amber, and blue) and one of the three imported fireplaces. The front entrance double doors had window panes of smoked or frosted glass with unique designs. One was later broken and replaced with clear glass. The other one is still intact and proudly displays the initials B. W. The hardware used in the living room area was all of heavy brass.

The house had a system of running water. In the attic was a wood tank with a copper inner liner. Water was pumped into the tank and flowed by gravity to the kitchen and elsewhere.

The three fireplaces were so constructed that a trap door allowed the ashes to fall into basement compartments from where they could be carried outside.

The barn is rather unusual in terms of design (meaning its "T" construction), size, the number of individual horse stalls, and the automated design for feed. The entire center section of the barn floor is laid with brick. There were individual hay chutes in virtually every individual partition or horse stall. The feeding system was automated in that there was a leg designed to move the grain into the bins located on the second floor. The grain was then allowed to fall to the first floor in channeled chutes so that a farmhand could open the door of a small bin, fill his bucket inside the opening, and feed the grain as needed.

The north part of the T-shaped barn with its board and batten siding is probably the older. The siding of the south part is typical lap siding. There are two cupolas on the south or crossing portion of the T and one on the north.

(See continuation sheet.)

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S



## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian    ☐ 16th Century    ☐ 18th Century    ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century    ☐ 17th Century    ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                                  |                                       |                                                         |                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry     |                                                         | <u>Western Settlement</u>                           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        |                                                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      |                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        |                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 |                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music        |                                                         |                                                     |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bernhard Warkentin homestead at Halstead was established in 1874 by the man who was probably more responsible than any other person for the development of the hard winter wheat industry in Kansas.

Warkentin was born in the Molotschna Mennonite settlement in South Russia on June 18, 1847. His father was the miller who introduced Turkey Red hard winter wheat to the Mennonite farmers of South Russia in 1860 or 1861. Young Warkentin came to America with three companions in 1872 and traveled extensively in Manitoba, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Kansas, and Texas. He made copious notes of his findings and wrote numerous letters to family and friends in Russia. Agents for a number of railroads contacted him because they had heard that a large number of Mennonites might come to America from Russia.

After attending McKendrie College in Lebanon, Illinois, for part of a year, he came to Halstead in 1873 with a band of Mennonites from Summerfield, Illinois. (He had made Summerfield his headquarters during his travels.)

Warkentin was excited about central Kansas and particularly the Halstead area which he believed had a climate and soil similar to that of the Russian steppes and was thus potentially a great wheat country. With that in mind he built the first grist mill in Harvey county in 1874 at Halstead on the Little Arkansas river. In 1875 he married Wilhelmina Eisenmayer, the daughter of a St. Louis miller. His mill was moved from the river bank in 1877 and converted to steam. The latest equipment was installed, including metal rollers, which worked especially well on the hard varieties of winter wheat and produced more and better flour. In 1878 he organized the Halstead Mill and Elevator Co. with his father-in-law as the principal stockholder and president.

The Warkentin homestead was purchased from the Santa Fe railroad in 1874, and the existing buildings were constructed in the late 1870's and early 1880's. The complex was known as the Little River Stock Farm and was regarded as a model stock farm of the day. Plans for Warkentin's large frame house were prepared in 1883 by John G. Haskell of Lawrence, who had worked on the State Capitol and was regarded as one of the state's most prominent early architects.

(See continuation sheet.)

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(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE Kansas	
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7. The exterior walls and roofline of the barn are the same as they were originally, but some changes have been made. The exterior walls show the effect of weathering and need paint. The roof has been covered with asphalt shingles. The original paint was gray; today the barn is a rather faded red. Many of the horse stall partitions have been removed and some of the earth floor area has been covered with concrete.

The carriage house has a board and batten exterior while the interior has an interesting system of bracing which gives support to the roof and walls. A cupola sits at the center of the ridge line.

In the center of the yard Warkentin located the power house, a small brick structure with arched door and window openings. The power unit located there was used to drive the automated machinery in the barn. A rope belt ran from the power house to the second floor of the barn. One of the farm wells was located at the power house.

A chicken barn, hog barn, and other buildings complete the farmstead. All are of wood construction with wood siding.

Except for paint and the asbestos siding of the house, the farmstead appears much as it did originally.

8. Since Warkentin believed that the central Kansas area was well suited to winter wheat and knew that his fellow Mennonites in Russia loved to raise wheat and other grains, he suggested that those migrating to America bring seed with them. Mennonites began coming to the U. S. from Russia in large numbers in 1874, primarily for religious freedom, and a number did bring Turkey Red hard winter wheat seed. (1974 has been officially proclaimed as the "Turkey Hard Red Winter <sup>wheat</sup> Centennial" by the governor of Kansas, Robert B. Docking.)

At a time when many of the other Kansas pioneers were growing spring wheat, Warkentin and his fellow Mennonite immigrants planted seed in the fall and watched it draw nourishment from the winter snows. Their wheat was different and harder. At first other millers were reluctant to buy it; they penalized it with low prices and discouraged its growth.

Warkentin argued that hard winter wheat produced better flour and a higher yield. To prove his point he began to experiment with various wheats on his farm at Halstead. Later in co-operation with Mark Carleton, a representative of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, he is said to have had as many as 300 experimental plots on his farm, many of which were located on the 20 acres included in this nomination.

In 1885 Warkentin went to Russia to purchase seed wheat for distribution to Kansas wheat farmers. After returning to the U. S. he made his home in Newton, Kansas. In 1898 he was commissioned by the Kansas State Millers Association and the Kansas State Grain Dealers Association to make a second trip for seed.

Warkentin was also involved in many other activities. He was one of the moving spirits behind the founding of Bethel College in North Newton and Bethel Deaconess Hospital in Newton; he was one of the organizers of the Halstead State Bank and also of the Kansas State Bank of Newton; he

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(Continuation Sheet) #2

STATE Kansas	
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(Number all entries)

8. (continued)

established mills at Halstead, Newton, Kansas City, Kan., and Blackwell, Okla.

The Warkentin homestead was used by many Mennonite immigrants who arrived in Halstead as a place to prepare for their journeys northward into northern Harvey and southern McPherson counties. Warkentin helped to induce the migration by writing many letters to his friends in Russia, encouraging the Russian Mennonites to come to Kansas. The Warkentin homestead is important to the development of the Kansas winter wheat industry. Warkentin was one of the earlier producers, an experimenter, a promoter and a miller who led in developing techniques for milling the hard winter wheat.

Warkentin's greatest contribution to Kansas and the nation lies in the role he played in the introduction of Turkey Red winter wheat to Kansas, helping to make it the "breadbasket" of the nation. And it was from the farm at Halstead that his efforts were made to encourage the Mennonite migration as well as the planting of hard winter wheat.

9.

"Mennonite Grew First Hard Wheat in Kansas," Topeka Journal, April 21, 1928.  
Newton Kansan, November 7, 1878.

Information abstracted from papers and documents of the Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, by Harley J. Stucky and furnished to Historic Sites Survey, Kansas State Historical Society.



## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Back of Bethel College--The Mennonite Story," Bethel College Bulletin (North Newton, Kan.), v. 19, no. 1 (February, 1932), pp. 10, 11.  
Halstead Independent, October 27, 1882, March 19, 1883.  
History of the State of Kansas (Chicago, A. T. Andreas, 1883), pp. 784, 785.  
 Krahn, Cornelius, editor, From the Steppes to the Prairies (Newton, Kan., Mennonite Publishing Office, 1949), pp. 10-37.  
Mennonite Encyclopedia (Hillsboro, Kan., Mennonite Brethren Publishing Co., 1955-1959).

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds		LATITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	LONGITUDE Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38° 00' 32"	97° 30' 16"				
NE	38° 00' 32"	97° 30' 00"				
SE	38° 00' 23"	97° 30' 00"				
SW	38° 00' 23"	97° 30' 16"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 20

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard Pankratz, Planner		
ORGANIZATION Kansas State Historical Society	DATE Jan. 9, 1974	
STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street		
CITY OR TOWN: Topeka	STATE Kansas	CODE 20

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name Nyle H. Miller

Nyle H. Miller

Title Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

Date January 14, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.-1960-NS  
MR 1559

#### ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ————— Light-duty —————  
Medium-duty ————— Unimproved dirt =====

U. S. Route

State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

### HALSTEAD, KANS.

N3800—W9730/7.5

1959

38°00'32"

38°00'23"

4207000m.N.

38°00'

97°30'

(SEDGWICK)